

March 20, 2007

To The Honorable Representative Shannon Augare
a/nd The Honorable Senator; Carol Juneau

As a Glacier County Commissioner in a county that would be directly affected by SB 332; a bill exempting Tribal Governments from paying Montana State Property Tax, I would like to go on record that I'm very much in favor of this bill.

Our county government would certainly miss out on some property tax, but I feel that it would be more than offset by other services and benefits that Glacier County receives from the Blackfeet Tribe and the federal government. Some examples would be the PL 874 impact aid dollars that go directly to the schools and the materials and coordinated services we share on our roads, our weed programs and other shared services.

Another issue we see in Glacier County is the Tribal Government struggling, as is our government, with dwindling funds and resources to provide critical infrastructure for the residents of Glacier County and the Blackfeet Reservation.

I can only imagine if other governments, such as our county government, had to pay the state property tax on property we own. Our courthouse, hospital, airport, roads, library, and other holdings would put a severe strain on our ability to meet the responsibility we have toward our citizens.

Lastly I ask that this bill be supported because it is only fair. Tribal governments should be treated the same as other governments. To not do so seems mean spirited and very unfair to Montana's first citizens, something Montana should not be. Thank you:

Michael DesRosier
Commissioner, Glacier County